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DE RUEHKA #1808/01 3240049  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 200049Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5571  
INFO RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 9339  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0980  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0270  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2584  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 8148  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 8235  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1877  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0373  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0556  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKDIA/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 001808

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SES-O  
DEPT FOR SCA/PB, SCA/EX  
DCHA/OFDA FOR ROBERT THAYER  
AID/W FOR AA MARK WARD AND ANE ANNE DIX  
DCHA/FFP FOR MATTHEW NIMS AND PAUL NOVICK  
ROME FOR FODAG  
BANGKOK FOR RDM/A TOM DOLAN, ROB BARTON  
KATHMANDU FOR USAID OFDA BILL BERGER AND SUE MCINTYRE  
TREASURY FOR ELIZABETH WEISS AND SUSAN CHUN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMGT](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [EAGR](#) [SENV](#)

BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH CYCLONE SIDR SITREP FOR NOVEMBER 19

REF: A) DHAKA 1801 B) DHAKA 1797 C) STATE 157623 D) DHAKA 1796 E)  
DHAKA-WASHINGTON EMAIL SITREPS OF NOVEMBER 15-16, 2007

11. (U) Summary: The official death toll in Cyclone Sidr rose to about 3,500 by early afternoon November 19, with local media quoting the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society chairman as saying the number could go as high as 10,000. A round-the-clock Embassy cyclone control room is now staffed by State, Defense and USAID personnel (telephone: 88-2-885-5500 extensions 2308, 2414 and 2019; fax: 88-2-882-3744). International contributions to the relief effort picked up steam, and Mission Dhaka made final preparations for the one-day visit by the USAID Administrator on November 20. A MARINE Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) arrived November 18 and began its assessment. End Summary.

#### LOSS OF LIFE

12. (U) As of 2 p.m. November 19 local time, the official Government of Bangladesh (GOB) death toll from the cyclone was about 3,500, nearly double the figure from a day earlier as reports streamed in from more remote regions. Local media reported that the final death toll was sure to be higher, with many quoting Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Chairman Mohammad Abdur Rob as saying the figure could rise to 10,000.

#### DEVASTATION

13. (U) A USAID team flew over the affected region the morning of November 19 to get an initial first-hand look at the destruction. From an altitude of less than 3,000 feet, the team saw scenes of

widespread destruction: Crops were decimated; trees were snapped in half; only a few buildings remained standing in some villages where thatch houses had been ripped to shreds. A Marine Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) will make its first reconnaissance trip to the affected areas on November 20.

#### THE RELIEF EFFORT

¶4. (U) The Bangladesh military is coordinating the emergency relief work. At a November 18 meeting with international donors, the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management said it had allocated more than 4,000 metric tons of rice, 5,000 tents, 17,000 blankets and 30 million taka (about US\$430,000) in relief grants. Another 350 million taka (about US\$5 million) was allocated as house building grants. The Ministry said its immediate priorities were burying the dead, restoring roads and telecommunications, and providing food, baby food, drinking water and other essentials to the cycloneQs victims. Bangladesh military officials expressed concern about water-borne epidemics and the possibility of food shortages next spring resulting from the crop destruction.

¶5. (SBU) The Armed Forces Division (AFD) of the Bangladesh military -- similar to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Q in a meeting with USG emergency relief personnel on November 19 expressed confidence about its ability to provide relief to the cyclone-hit areas. The military has 12 helicopters and three fixed-wing aircraft involved in the relief efforts along with several navy craft. The AFD said it would not need much U.S. military aid but asked for two to four helicopters; should the country be inundated with relief supplies the demand for outside logistic support would increase. We will provide Washington our assessment of unique U. S. Military contributions to the AID effort by Septel.

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#### INTERNATIONAL AND USG ASSISTANCE

¶6. (U) Local media reported that donor nations and agencies had pledged more than \$25 million, with offers of assistance coming from Europe, India, Pakistan, Canada, Japan and the United Nations. Other nations offering aid included China, which announced \$1 million in emergency relief, and Australia, which announced an initial tranche of nearly US\$2.7 million to relief organizations.

#### USG ASSISTANCE

¶7. (U) Print and broadcast media gave prominent play to President BushQs message of condolence and to initial USG relief efforts. Leaders of major political parties who were briefed on USG activities expressed gratitude for the assistance. The one-day visit by USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore on November 20, during which she will fly over the cyclone-hit region and hand over relief supplies, will include several media events. One will highlight the arrival of 35 metric tons of USAID hygiene kits, plastic sheets, blankets, jerry cans.

PASI